

"DROP-ME-A-SOUVENIR POSTAL"



HARDLY more than five years ago the post-card "craze" took root in this country. It has grown to such enormous proportions that big business houses have been formed and are waxing steadily richer whose interests lie solely with these bits of pasteboard. One might travel throughout every state in the Union and visit every hamlet in each state and find it difficult to discover a community in which post-card souvenir views of at least the "main street," the post office, the town hall and the church cannot be purchased. In all the large cities there are numerous establishments devoted exclusively to the sale of these cheap, attractive souvenirs, and the fad for collecting huge albums of cards of all sorts and descriptions and from all points of the compass has gripped thousands on thousands of otherwise perfectly normal American citizens—old and young alike.

Of all the cities of this country, Washington offers the greatest field for souvenir post-cards. Hundreds of thousands of tourists pour in and out of our city gates, eager to secure picture souvenirs of the National capital to send to the folks back home, to friends on foreign shores or to add to their own collections. It is impossible to estimate closely the vast number of post cards purchased annually in this city, but the figures would probably run well above 15,000,000. Practically every visitor buys two or more cards, even when the visit is merely a matter of an hour or two. Almost every drug store and newsstand in the city has its stock of souvenir cards, and there are a number of stores dealing practically in nothing else.

When the fad first began to spread it was through the medium of the so-called

comic card. A traveler would choose from an assorted lot of illustrated joke cards—the humor usually lying in a whimsical application of some time-honored phrase of correspondence such as "I am taking time" with a picture of a man lifting a victim's watch—and send appropriate subjects to his or her friends. For a long time this was considered the real thing in humor, and the traveler who showed the most comical choice in post cards to send his far-off friends was the real Joe Miller. But the public began to tire as the same old jokes drifted thousands of miles hither and yon—and when the post-card man began to branch out into the photographic souvenir card the comics were practically deserted, and everybody began buying the "points of interest" cardboards.

These started simply as reproductions of photographic views and were printed in black and white. From the beginning it was found that the best work could only be obtained in Germany. American workmanship and lithographing processes did not seem to compare with the German article, and the post-card houses of this country soon fell into sending their subjects and big orders to firms in the Kaiser's domain. From Germany came the tinted photographic cards, which were followed by the beautifully lithographed cards in many colors. The work advanced in artistic merit as the public taste bettered. Today some of the lithographed landscape cards are bits of art work that would bring praise from the lips of critical painters.

A visit to one of Washington's largest post-card emporiums is well worth while. The Star man dropped into one of these places where an enormous stock of cards hangs from the walls on all sides. The proprietor said there were over 100,000

cards in his stock. They hung in wire framework, a pack of duplicate cards in each partition. Every subject from a scriptural quotation to a ballet girl with a champagne glass was included in this vast array of picture souvenirs. Washington's public buildings and places of interest in general formed the larger part of the stock. These, the proprietor explained, are the most popular of all with the visitors to the National capital.

Each building of prominence is shown from many points of view. For instance, there are twenty views of the Capitol. Each view was reproduced in three styles of cards—black and white, a sort of purplish moonlight effect and in color with blue sky and fleecy clouds. These three styles ran through the entire stock of Washington view cards. The proprietor explained that some collectors prefer the colors, others the black and white, and still others the tinted cards. Their tastes are respected in each different view, so that the collector may fill his album with

Washington souvenir cards of one color scheme.

Of all the public buildings and places of interest in Washington the Capitol, White House, Monument and Congressional Library are the most favored by post-card purchasing tourists. Various views of the White House are included in the stock of the main establishments, and views of and from the Monument can be found in great number. The beautiful Library building is perhaps the favorite subject of the souvenir post-card makers. The Star man counted more than 100 views of this structure and its interior in the stock of the place visited.

Suburban Washington, with its places of historical interest and picturesque value, also comes in for a share of the post-card man's attention. Views of Rock Creek Park, the Zoo, the canal, the river, Arlington, Cabin John bridge, Fort Myer, the Soldiers' Home and a few of the sub-

jects photographed and sold in colors at two for 5 cents. Among the views of scenes and places surrounding Washington can be found pictures of old houses, mills and dams that the average Washingtonian never knew to exist.

Of the neighboring places of interest Mount Vernon is, of course, the principal subject used by the post-card makers. The establishment visited by The Star man sells twenty different views of Washington's home. The series leads from the northern gate, through the grounds and buildings, showing the various rooms and everything that the visitor to the beautiful place is interested in. This series is a great seller. Orders for new shipments of these cards are sent almost monthly to the lithographing house at Dresden, Germany.

The bronze equestrian statues in Washington's parks and squares are also favorite subjects of the souvenir post cards. Lincoln's death bed and the little house he died in are in the list, as are, of course,

Ford's Theater and the alley out of which Booth made his escape. Then there are the famous "Washington's headquarters" house in Georgetown and the Sheridan monument at Arlington, the railroad stations and Center market, the post office building alone and included in the view of Pennsylvania avenue from the Treasury to the Capitol—these and others covering every public building and object of interest in the city.

Turning away from the stock of Washington views, The Star man found scenes of all the principal countries of Europe. These, the proprietor explained, were kept in stock to supply returning visitors to foreign shores with pictures of the places they visited, but at which they neglected to secure souvenir cards. Many are also sold to naturalized American citizens who want pictures of familiar scenes in the "old country," and there are also many collectors with no prospect of ever visiting Europe, but who want the cards for their albums anyway.

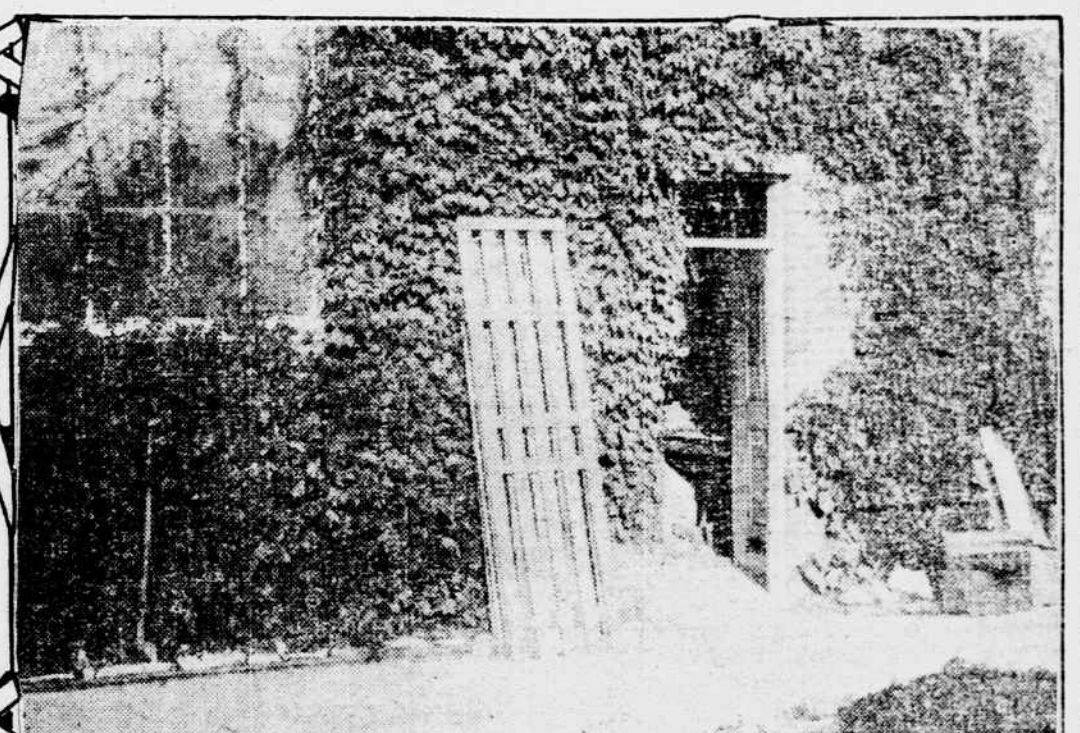
Then there was a large collection of well-colored reproductions of famous paintings. Most of these were of works in the galleries in Germany, and, of course, were the products of German lithographers. The proprietor of the store said that many collectors of the post cards kept several separate albums devoted to different kinds of cards. The old masters are reproduced mainly for the benefit of the collectors who wish to fill an album entirely with cards of paintings.

Of fancy cards there were hundreds of varieties in the place visited by The Star man, subjects of every imaginable character were included. There were sets of reproductions of a noted artist's pen-and-ink sketches, a set of funny little children pictures drawn and painted by a prominent woman illustrator, and a set of cartoons signed by a man whose work is the feature of a big American daily newspaper. There were fancy heads of various types of, too-beautiful-for-anything women done in lovely tints, and wonderfully beautiful children were shown in various cunning poses and costumes. Of humor there were all kinds, ranging from the "you've-got-to-laugh-at-this" type to the repressed mirth variety. Suggestive subjects, such as were so popular a year or so ago and are still the rage in bucolic communities such as New York city, were not included in the stock of this establishment, and, in fact, the craze for the sort of post card that has to be put in an envelope to be mailed seems to be dying out everywhere, so the post-card emporium man told The Star reporter.

The picture postal has come to be recognized as something more than a passing fad. Its value from an educational and formational standpoint has commanded attention, and it is easy to believe that the picture postal has come to stay.



ANCESTRAL VINE OF ALL AMERICAN AMPELOPSIS IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS



Among the treasures in vegetation which grow in the National Botanic Garden in addition to the memorial trees is the ampelopsis veitchii, the parent of millions of the same vine and the ancestral vine of all of them in the United States. The vine is an English immigrant. It was brought to this country many years ago by William R. Smith, superintendent of the Botanic Garden. Hence Mr. Smith is the foster father of a vine that climbs and clasps uncounted walls from sea to sea—the foster father of the most popular city vine in America.

There are many varieties of the ampelopsis, a word which, by the way, comes from the combination of two Greek words—ampelos, vine, and opsis, resemblance. Not only is the plant with which this story deals one of a large number of varieties, but this particular kind is known by several names, among them being ampelopsis veitchii, ampelopsis roylei, ampelopsis tricuspidata, southside ivy, Boston ivy and Japan ivy. It might also be called China ivy, because it grows in China as well as in Japan, and no doubt many of the vines in Europe are sprung from the Chinese stock. It is met with throughout eastern Asia and the Himalaya region. It is closely related to the grape and is kindred to the Virginia creeper, which is sometimes disguised under the name of ampelopsis quinquefolia.

Mr. Smith brought a cutting of this vine from Slough, a city of about 12,000 inhabitants, in Buckinghamshire, two and a half miles northeast from Windsor. Slough has another distinction in addition to that of having furnished the United States with this vine, for it was at Slough that Sir William Herschel erected his observatory.

The imported cutting was nurtured by Mr. Smith and set out on the south side of the brick building near the west end of the Botanic Garden, in which are the offices of the superintendent and assistant superintendent. It has overspread the building and would overrun the garden were it not kept in check by the shears. Year after year the seed of this vine have been sent to all parts of the country, for the ampelopsis may be propagated from the seed as well as from green-wood and hardwood cuttings.